Important Dates

May

• 17th - Embracing Career Diversity for Graduate Students, a public lecture led by Chris Golde, 4:30 p.m., Holliday Forum

June

• 4th - Classes begin, 7:30 a.m.
• 6th - Final date for dropping courses without receiving a grade of “W,” 4:30 p.m., deadline
• 7th - Final date for adding courses for credit and making section changes, 4:30 p.m., deadline
• 7th - Final date for Degree only**approval and registration, 4:30 p.m. deadline. All degree requirements must be met, including final defense reports and the approval of all format corrections requested by the document editor. Also, 1) final defense report is due for non-thesis students and 2) Survey of Earned Doctorates completion certificate is due for doctoral students
• 8th - Final date for submitting to the Graduate School “Application for Degree” to be awarded at summer commencement, 4:30 p.m., deadline
• 8th - Final date for submitting to the Graduate School “Request for Final Defense” (comprehensive exam, thesis/dissertation defense) for degrees to be awarded at summer commencement, 4:30 p.m., deadline. Note: All final defense requests must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the date of the defense, but no later than June 8th.

For more important dates and deadlines, please view the Graduate Calendars for Spring 2018 and Summer 2018.
Embracing Career Diversity for Graduate Students
An Interview with Chris Golde

The LSU Graduate School invites LSU community members and the public to “Embracing Career Diversity for Graduate Students,” a public lecture led by Scholar Chris Golde, co-author of The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education in the Twenty-First Century. The public lecture will be the start of Golde’s two-day visit at LSU for the Graduate School’s 2018 Summer Institute on the Future of Graduate Studies, which will focus on Alternative-Academic (Alt-Ac) or Career Diversity development and placement for graduate students.

A scholar, career coach, and consultant, Golde has worked with graduate students for more than 25 years. She currently works in Stanford Career Education, commonly known as BEAM (Bridging Education, Ambition, and Meaningful Work). The career center serves all Stanford students, while Golde works directly with PhD students and postdoctoral scholars. Golde has focused on graduate education from a variety of angles, helping students plan to seek faculty positions, but also those who look beyond academia.

“I love this frame where people are thinking about career diversity because it shows that we all have possible future lives and access to a lot of good choices,” says Golde. “Each step to a career choice is exciting, and there are many possibilities, so I try to communicate that to our students.”

Golde’s willingness and excitement to work with graduate students developed long before her role in the Office of Graduate Studies. She holds both a PhD in Education and an MA in Sociology from Stanford University. While completing doctoral studies, Golde was heavily involved with the student body and sought to address issues on campus. She has devoted her career to exploring the question, “Why do some students succeed and others do not?” Golde used her background in student life and student affairs to focus more on educational institutions’ role in helping or hindering students. “Even as an undergraduate, I recognized that institutions’ role is to help students learn and grow, and that’s why we need to fix something that’s not working,” said Golde. “That’s the approach I’ve taken as a scholar, dean, career coach, faculty member, speaker, and writer.”

After serving as a Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for five years, Golde returned to Stanford as Associate Vice Provost of Graduate Education at Stanford University. She worked extensively to create professional development opportunities for graduate students with a direct focus on problem-solving. Her efforts led to the launch of DARE (Diversifying Academia and Recruiting Excellence), a doctoral fellowship program which helps doctoral students whose presence will diversify the professoriate prepare for academic careers. Having been in place for more than ten years, more than 200 fellows have participated in DARE. “It’s an extraordinary program that I’m really proud of, where I knew I was touching hundreds of thousands of students.”

Nonetheless, Golde believes that students’ success depends on more than the institution. “The most successful students are those who see themselves as a part of a community and will ask for help,” she said. “You need help to refine ideas in your writing and communication, but also help to remain persistent through the hard times. Asking for help is a sign of strength rather than a sign of weakness.”

Golde will provide more insight on graduate student success at the public lecture, “Embracing Career Diversity for Graduate Students.” She will discuss the importance of embracing career diversity for graduate students as they make career choices based on their skills, interests, and values. “I want the audience to think about the multiple ways in which people with advanced degrees can serve society through meaningful work,” she says.

Please join us on Thursday, May 17, 2018, at 4:30 p.m. in the Holliday Forum at the Manship School of Mass Communication, and again for a reception to directly follow at the Cox Communications Center for Student-Athletes.
Graduate Student Spotlight - Portia Henderson, School of Social Work

What factors influenced your decision to attend graduate school at LSU?

I received my bachelor’s and master’s here, and therefore I desired the ability to diversify my educational experience. However, my husband has been at his job for 13 years and is the main provider in our household. Moving was not an option. I began my search for social work PhD programs in the state. I quickly learned LSU was the only university with the Social Work PhD program. Even though I desired a new experience, I am happy that I have continued at my alma mater.

What is your involvement with the graduate student community?

My involvement is limited because I’m married with two children. When I started the program, I had one child, and he was in daycare, but I had another baby in May 2017, so I’m unable to attend events unless they are family friendly. I have instead hosted gatherings at my house to discuss things happening in the community as a way of getting involved. We’ve organized a watch party for the documentary, 13th, which addresses the criminalization of African-Americans. We’ve also talked about police brutality in Baton Rouge and the United States and how we can use our work to advocate for changes in the system.

Tell us about your primary research interests in the School of Social Work.

I am interested in the academic achievement and engagement of African-American children. I am concerned with systemic racism and the lack of cultural education provided in the schools, but also social identity development for the student. My research has also led me to the unique subject of African-American homeschoolers. I will complete a qualitative or mixed-methods study to learn more about the motivations and methods of homeschooling for African American families. Last year, I conducted a pilot study with African-American families who homeschool in various online Facebook communities. Out of 134 parents across the United States, 74% of those stated they homeschool to provide higher quality education; 58% wanted to strengthen or maintain a passion for learning; 51% stated concerns with systemic racism; and 47% stated a lack of cultural education as a motive for homeschooling. While my concern is with the school, interviewing these families can help inform of the needs of African-American children. There is also a gap in the literature regarding the needs of black families who homeschool. They have additional concerns than their counterparts (including lack of cultural education, low expectations, and so on). I’m interested in learning more about how parents who provide home education approach these issues. The narrative has impacted me in a way I didn’t expect because I hear about how parents have made it work with limitations such as income, education, marital status, and so on.

What are your plans after you receive your LSU doctoral degree?

I’m strongly considering homeschooling my children, and because of that, my path may be different. I would potentially like to become an adjunct professor in addition to volunteering in the community. I’d like to become more involved in the community by volunteering with the school system and local community agencies who provide services to children who are at risk. Through my volunteer work, I’d like to look at policy issues regarding education and find other ways to get involved.

What are you passionate about in higher or graduate education?

My concerns lately pertain to mothers, fathers, nontraditional students, and those who have obstacles that impede the ability to do school work. I’ve been a student at the undergraduate and master’s level without responsibilities, and it was difficult then. Now I’m a doctoral student with a family, and I’m passionate about mentorship because it’s important to have someone to help you understand this process, especially if you haven’t done it before. You can’t be 100% at everything, and I want people to know that it’s ok to take care of yourself and your family. I know that I’m welcome here as a parent and a student and that both of those titles are accomplishments. You just need people who support you in your roles.
Graduate Faculty Spotlight - Professor Kenny Varner, School of Education

What factors influenced your decision to work at LSU?

Growing up in Rochester, NY, I had the wonderfully odd experience of having multiple teachers from South Louisiana. Those were the teachers I loved most, and as a result of their influence starting in first grade, I have been a Saints fan nearly my whole life. Given that I am a critical race and internationalization of education scholar, LSU is positioned geographically, historically, and contemporarily in a place that is very relevant to the work I do concerning both race and internationalization. I was also drawn to LSU because of the Curriculum Theory Project (CTP) and the Holmes programs. The CTP is a collaborative of faculty and students committed to thinking about Education (with a big E) along the critical, philosophical, and socio-cultural intersections, and it is precisely that intersectional approach that characterizes my interests as an academic. I love that CTP draws in the best and the brightest, campus-wide, looking for their balance on the critical edge.

What is your involvement with the graduate student community?

I am blessed with the most talented and thoughtful students one could ask for, and I am a passionate advocate for their best interests and fiercely protective of their well-being. In my seven years at LSU, I have graduated around 20 doctoral students and more than 150 master’s students. I currently have 20 doctoral students, which keeps me motivated, busy, and intrigued at how the world is full of possibilities for graduate students. I’ve also had the unique opportunity of advising international doctoral students from Taiwan, Vietnam, Pakistan, Germany, and Chile. For 15 years now and all seven at LSU, I co-direct and lead the LSU Teach in Chile program, which is the most diverse and affordable summer study abroad program at LSU and brings together undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral students. Finding pathways for graduate students to study abroad is not the easiest task, but we have created a beautiful synergy with the program and have had the opportunity to work with graduate students from several programs. I have made it a priority to ensure my students are actively engaged in scholarship and have frequent opportunities for publication, mentorship, and active induction into a scholarly life in the academy. I think I love nothing more than when a graduate student earns their first publication.

Tell us about your primary research interests at the School of Education.

My research is always fundamentally centered on the question of institutional and individual equity, diversity, and difference politics (particularly around identity). Over the course of my career, my research interests have evolved from understanding how whiteness operationalizes in school settings between teacher and student identity differences, to broader PK-20 concerns about race, racial identity, and equity. I have branched out to even broader community concerns, like police-to-community violence and the extra-judicial killings of people of color. I am currently working a lot with my interest in the internationalization of education and pedagogies of love and engagement. It is vitally important that graduate students interested in academic life leave themselves room for growth and evolution of their own scholarly trajectory.

What are you passionate about in higher or graduate education?

I had a blessed experience working with incredible scholars like Cynthia Tyson, Cynthia Dillard, and Valerie Kinloch at The Ohio State University. They pushed me to think in an interdisciplinary way and to work toward publication from the beginning. Transitioning from a student to a faculty member, I’ve learned that there has to be a dual focus on recruitment and retention of graduate students. I am passionate about recruiting interesting students, particularly international students and those from historically underrepresented groups, while focusing on how to retain them not just physically, but emotionally in the work of graduate studies. I have worked to create a social network for my students to operate like a family, where we engage each other as scholars and friends. This approach has kept me engaged and helps me demand as much from myself as I expect from my students. I am passionate about advocacy for our students and making sure that we are responsive to who they are as people. I am also passionate about graduate students having the opportunity to study abroad and be engaged in the larger world of ideas outside of campus, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and the United States.
Graduate Staff Spotlight - Rebecca Kelley, LSU Libraries

What factors influenced your decision to work at LSU?

I received my Master of Library and Information Science about six years ago, and after working in banking for several years, I wanted to work at LSU because I saw the opportunity to support students’ learning. In both the classroom and one-on-one consultations, I introduce students to library resources and highlight library services. You feel like you’re making a difference, and that’s really what attracted me to librarianship.

What is your involvement with the graduate student community?

I work with faculty to deliver research instruction, commonly referred to as guest lecturing, and I have been able to speak with several graduate student classes at the Manship School of Mass Communication. Through those instruction sessions, I highlight databases and resources that may help students for specific class/research assignments or their personal research agenda. In one-on-one consultations with graduate students, it’s sometimes a matter of helping to satisfy a research need that seems impossible. Being a research instruction librarian is about doing our best to get students what they need.

Tell us about your role as a Research and Instruction Services Librarian.

Our primary mission is to support the research, teaching, and learning here at LSU. Research and Instruction Librarians provide outreach, instruction, and specialized services for LSU students and faculty by advocating for the Libraries’ resources and services. We seek partnerships across campus, deliver instruction via research sessions, classes and workshops, as well as individual or group consultations. My colleagues and I develop discipline-specific web pages (or research guides) for courses and topics. We also post tutorials to help students navigate our resources. We can direct a student who’s doing historical research to Special Collections at Hill Memorial Library, where we have a great collection of resources. If graduate students don’t know about Interlibrary Loan (ILL), they should know that we’ll work hard to get something if it’s not in the library. We also have newspaper databases, and I’m dedicated to becoming an expert at those so I can support the students at Manship. There are other services available, and we’re constantly working to improve what we do to support students and faculty.

What are you passionate about in higher or graduate education?

I do find meeting with students very fulfilling, especially when they have a research need. Sometimes, students get to graduate school and don’t know how to do research, so I enjoy introducing them to the basics. I’m happy to help students develop search strategies by gently letting them know there is a better way or place to search, and when they see that more information is available than what they thought, they are very appreciative. It’s very fulfilling to meet with students and to fill a gap in the information they have.
Another year in the books

Each year, we bid farewell to hundreds of students who have fulfilled rigorous degree requirements, including theses, projects, and dissertations. Our students have produced cutting-edge research to fill the gaps that will solve problems in Louisiana, but also globally. And while they are developing a research agenda or a niche, they commit themselves to enhance the graduate student experience through interactions fostered in graduate student organizations, tailgate events, talks and seminars, and study sessions. Graduate students are activists, teachers, leaders, parents, organizers, and more.

Now, several of those students are entering a new phase of life, but with an LSU graduate degree. LSU's 2018 Commencement ceremonies took place Friday, May 11 and Saturday, May 12, and of the 3,967 graduates, 554 received master's degrees; 31 received education specialist or graduate certificates; 85 received Doctor of Veterinary Medicine; 96 received a PhD; and eight received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree. We congratulate all LSU graduates, and wish you the best for your future endeavors. What's next? If you have made post-graduation plans or commitments, please send your story to gradcom@lsu.edu.